

The present invention relates to a methods of inhibiting postharvest disease or desiccation in a fruit or vegetable, either by treating a fruit or vegetable with a hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide under conditions effective to inhibit postharvest disease or desiccation, or by providing a transgenic plant or plant seed transformed with a DNA molecule encoding a hypersensitive response elicitor polypeptide or protein and growing the transgenic plant or transgenic plant produced from the transgenic plant seed under conditions effective to inhibit a postharvest disease or desiccation in a fruit or vegetable harvested from the transgenic plant. Also disclosed are DNA constructs and expression systems, host cells, and transgenic plants containing the DNA construct.